

IN THE CLAIMS:

This following list of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the above-identified application:

List of Claims

1. (Original) A stripping assembly (10) for stripping a can from a punch in a can bodymaker (1), the assembly (10) comprising:
a plurality of stripper fingers (12) spaced around an annular housing(32);
and
a biasing device (20) for biasing the tips (34) of the fingers (12) radially inwardly from the housing (32) into a central bore (5) of the bodymaker (1); and
an actuator (14, 54) within the housing (32) which, in use, when the punch is carrying a can through the bore on the forward stroke, lifts each finger tip clear of the can carried on the punch, against the action of the biasing device (20), and when the punch is on the return stroke, is disabled so as to allow the biasing device (20) to cause the finger tips to close and strip the can from the punch;
characterized in that the fingers (12) are resiliently mounted for self-aligning with the cut edge of the can on the return stroke of the punch.
2. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to claim 1, in which the fingers are resiliently mounted on an 'O'-ring or cord item (42).
3. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to claim 1 or claim 2, in which the actuator (14, 54) comprises a piston.

4. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, in which the fingers (12) include an inner (26) and an outer (27) portion within the housing, the outer portion (27) contacting a lip (16) about which the fingers (12) pivot on the forward stroke as the piston (14) pushes the inner portion (26) of the fingers (12).

5. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, in which the actuator (14) is situated in an upstream portion and the biasing device (20) in a downstream portion.

6. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, in which the fingers (12) include an inner (56) and an outer (57) portion within the housing, the inner portion (56) contacting a point (58) about which the fingers (12) pivot on the forward stroke as the piston (54) pushes the outer portion (57) of the fingers (12).

7. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to claim 6, in which the actuator (54) is situated in a downstream portion.

8. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to claim 6 ~~or claim 7~~, further including a guide ring 50.

9. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly (10) according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, in which the biasing device (20) is an O-ring or spring.

10. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, in which the actuator (14) further comprises compressed air or fluid.

11. (Currently Amended) A The stripping assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, in which the compressed air or fluid flow is operated by a solenoid which is timed by a signal from the bodymaker (1).

12. (Original) A method of stripping a can from a punch in a can bodymaker (1) having a stripping assembly (10) with a plurality of fingers (12) and a biasing device (20) for biasing the tips of the fingers (12) into the bore (5) of the bodymaker (1), the method comprising:

enabling the actuator (14) and lifting each finger tip (34) clear of the can carried on the punch against the action of the biasing device (20) when the punch is carrying a can through the bore (5) on the forward stroke; and
disabling the actuator when the punch is on the return stroke and allowing the biasing device (20) to close the finger tips (34) to strip the can from the punch; and
characterized by

enabling the fingers (12) to self-align to the shape of the can on the return stroke of the punch.

13. (New) The stripping assembly according to claim 2, in which the actuator (14, 54) comprises a piston.

14. (New) The stripping assembly according to claim 7, further including a guide ring 50.